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T H E  
*Necessity and Advantages*  
O F  
EDUCATION.



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THE  
NECESSITY  
AND  
ADVANTAGES  
OF  
EDUCATION.

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By WILLIAM HIRST, Master of the  
*Free-School at Hertford.*

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*His saltem accumulem donis, & fungar inani  
Munere. — — —* VIRG.

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L O N D O N:

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for the AUTHOR.

MDCCXXVIII.







T O

William Hale, *Esq;*

S I R,



*S* the Station I am in, was first appointed by the Bounty of Your Well-disposed ANCESTORS, and the chief Encouragement I had to undertake it, after a long Vacancy, was the kind Reception I met with from Your Worthy RELATIONS: Gratitude, as well as Duty, call upon me to acknowledge my-

## DEDICATION.

*myself accountable to YOU for my Conduct in it.*

*And while there is so good a Provision both for the Education of Youth Here, and their Maintenance at the University, 'tis a great Pity so many particular Discouragements should have conspired with the general Decay of Learning to make This, like many other Ancient Establishments, degenerate from its Original Institution.*

*Being hereby exposed to their Censures, who have too little Consideration to discern, or too much Prejudice to own the true Reason; I am obliged, in my own Vindication, to offer my Mite in the Treasury, after the Publick has received the Tribute of more valuable Talents; that I may at least*

## DEDICATION.

*least shew my Disposition to, in Proportion as I am deprived of the Opportunity of my Duty.*

*I have, Sir, as little Reason to expect so slight a Performance should have any Influence on the General Taste, as I have Occasion to offer any Directions to regulate Yours, while You enjoy the more instructive Examples of so many finish'd Characters in Your own Family. But this Essay, with its Author, being submitted to Your Protection; if Your Perusal of it, on that Account, with more than common Attention, possesseth You with such a Sense of the Advantages of Learning, as to reconcile You to the Difficulties in attaining it; which Your promising Genius leaves me no Room to doubt of: I shall have the private*  
*Satisfaction*



# DEDICATION.

*Satisfaction of thinking myself not altogether unworthy of Your Favours :  
Being,*

S I R,

Your Most Obligated,

Most Devoted,

Humble Servant,

*William Hirst.*



T H E





T H E  
*Necessity and Advantages*  
O F  
EDUCATION.



H O' the Faculty of Reason be the chief distinguishing Excellency that sets *Mankind* above the rest of the *Creation* ; yet if it be unconfin'd, it makes Men worse than Brutes ; or, if unimproved, little better.

better. It has therefore been the Care of all Civilized Nations, to furnish Youth with good Principles, as a Remedy to the one ; and useful Learning, to the other Inconveniency.

In order to be convinced of the Necessity of Education, let us

1. Consider the deplorable State of Mankind without it.

And to be made sensible of its Advantages, let us

2. Take a View of its beneficial Influence on Human Society.

I. Let

## I.

Let us consider the deplorable State of Mankind without Education.

The Variety of Passions Man is prompted to by that refined and active Principle essential to his *Species*, and his superior Capacity of putting them in Execution, make so great a Trust too dangerous to be left to his own private Inclinations, as directed by Interest, Pleasure, or Caprice.

The Gratification of his present Appetites, is often so inconsistent with his Own, or the Common Good, that a Prospect into the *Consequences* of Things is necessary to determine his Pursuits, which cannot be discover'd without the Eyes of right Reason and Experience: And on these are founded the many excellent Precepts

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of Philosophy, Laws of Government, and Institutions of Religion in the World.

Now the Mind, generally taking its Bent from the first Impression, must be early form'd according to these Rules ; else the giddy Youth, launching into an unknown World, without the Directions of a skilful Pilot, must be left to the blind Impulse of every boisterous Passion. The Faculty of Reason, under such Circumstances, like a Sword in a Madman's Hand, only furnishes him with Means of doing more Mischief, and so puts him in a Capacity of being more powerfully Wicked.

And not only is he arm'd with every ill Quality, but destitute of every good one.

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For those Qualifications that render Men useful in Society, being the Result of the Experience of many Ages; without a more compendious way to Wisdom, it would be time for a Man to Die before he had learn'd the true Art of Living: His native Advances in Knowledge are so very slow, that in the Compass of a single Life, unassisted, he would scarce be capable of sustaining much higher Offices than a Brute. We cannot be supply'd with a perfect Instance of the gross Ignorance of unimproved Nature in a polite Country: Yet even Here, we find some almost as rough in their Behaviour, and coarse in their Understanding, as the Beasts they converse with.

But if we turn the Prospective upon those poor Wretches that live without Religion, Laws, Arts, or almost

almost Language; we shall have the Mortification of finding them to be mere Savages in human Shape. Hence fabulous Antiquity represents those who first could reduce a barbarous People into Order, as having commanded the Attention not only of Beasts, but of Stocks and Stones, by their Harmony.

But we who are in full Possession of the Arts of civilizing Mankind, are apt to be too insensible of the Cause of those Advantages we enjoy. Our Wills are rectify'd by being early made acquainted with the Boundaries of Good and Evil, and our Understandings improved by being taught to distinguish between Truth and Falshood from our tender Years: And farther Opportunities of regulating both are given, by being instructed in Letters and Languages; in Speculative and Practical Knowledge.

Thus



Thus far advanced, we become vain and conceited of our own Abilities; neither considering to whom we owe the Improvement, or even the Faculty of our Reason.

It will not therefore, in the next place, be an unnecessary Labour, to enquire into the Cause of these Advantages.

## II.

As the Almighty Creator has endow'd Man with nobler Faculties than any created Being on Earth, so greater Returns of Gratitude are due from him to their common Lord. But those bright Rays of Divine Light are so clouded with the gross Appetites of Sense, that their proper Influences are in a great measure interrupted by these interposing Vapours which deprive Mankind of the  
View

View of Heaven. To trace Nature back, thro' all her Mazes, to her Source and Fountain, is a Matter of such Intricacy, as requires the Directions of an experienced Guide. The Light of Nature, in its utmost Glory, was not able to conduct Mankind thro' so difficult a Progress: And 'tis no Wonder their misled Fancies form'd so many false Images of an *Unknown God*. On that Account the Supreme Being, in Compassion to bewilder'd Mortals, afforded them a *Light to their Paths*; and when all human Means proved ineffectual, the *Divine Law* was their *School-Master*.

The Person first made Choice of to communicate this Law to Mankind, was learned in all the *Wisdom of the Egyptians*. And whenever there was farther Occasion for God's immediate Directions, they were con-

convey'd by the Mouth of such as were brought up in the *Schools of the Prophets*. When the Almighty thought proper to withdraw his more peculiar Influences, He left the Exposition and Interpretation of his Laws to the Care of *Learned Men*.

And tho' when the *Eternal Wisdom of God* was manifested in the Flesh, as a Proof of its superior Excellency to the *Wisdom of this World*, such Instruments were made Use of, as owed their Success to Super-natural Assistance; yet, when the Christian Religion was thus founded, Human Learning was early employ'd in its Service; and it was recommended to the Gentile World, by the E'gant Writings of S<sup>t</sup> Luke, the *Physician*; and S<sup>t</sup> Paul, brought up at the Feet of *Gamaliel*.

The *Fathers* of the Primitive Church added Learning to their Piety,



ty, else they could not so successfully have defended it against Heathens without, and Hereticks within : And Religion has ever since been corrupted, or reformed, in proportion to the Decay or Revival of Learning ; and at this Day is treated with Respect, or Contempt, according to the different Abilities of its Advocates.

Therefore by how much Religion conduces to the Publick or Private, the Present or Future Happiness of Mankind ; by so much Human Learning, which preserves its Purity, and a good Education, which secures its Practice, require our serious Regard.

The next great Instrument of human Felicity is *Civil Government* ; and how far Learning contributes to the proper Discharge of This, I shall in the next place consider.

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Now such an universal Knowledge is requisite in the Administration of Publick Affairs, to make an impartial Dispensation of Justice among the various Ranks and Orders of Men, suitable to their respective Stations ; that not long Experience only of Men and Things which have fallen under their own Observation, but also particular Acquaintance with the Histories of other Nations and Ages, are Introductions to that *Wisdom by which Kings reign, and Princes decree Justice.* Again : To make Mankind so sensible of such equal Distribution, as to acquiesce in their Duty and Allegiance, requires so deep a Penetration into their Humours, that a distinct Comprehension of the several Springs and Movements of Human Passions is absolutely necessary.

And it may not here be impertinent to observe, on the other hand, be-

fore Subjects can arrive at such a due Notion of the Advantages of Political Combinations, as to contribute their Endeavours to the Service of the Publick in their several Capacities; some previous Qualification is requisite on their own parts; and accordingly we have always found the most happy Governments among Polite People; and that Barbarous Empires were ever disturb'd with Rebellions on one side, or Tyranny on the other.

If we farther enquire into the Executive Abilities of the *Law*, we shall find so many Statutes necessary to be acquainted with, before an Opinion can be given in Certain, and so many Precedents in Doubtful Cases; so clear a Head to discern Truth from Sophistication, and so eloquent a Tongue to recommend it effectually; that without a long Course of Study, a Man cannot be truly qualify'd for this Learned Profession.

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The Uses of Learning, in *Common Life*, are so many, that upon particular Examination, it will appear, we are upon one Account or other beholden to it for all the private Advantages we enjoy.

Man, indeed, has greater Assistances for the Preservation and Felicity of his State ; but he has also greater Occasion than any created Being : Nature has made a competent Provision for all other Creatures, suitable to their Wants ; has proportion'd their Constitutions to the Element they are to live in ; and supplies them with Food and Raiment at its own Expence : They have Sagacity enough to distinguish between Good and Evil, and Appetites so moderate, as to be less liable to the Disorders occasion'd by Excess.

But as Man alone cannot come into the World without Assistance, and is  
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not fit to go out of it without Improvement; so his whole Life is a continued *Series* of Care; and he cannot live up to the Dignity of his Being, without employing his Ingenuity in supplying the Defects of his Nature. He must have a Train of Arts for his Life-guard, against the Climate without, and Distempers within; the last of which, as all secret Enemies, act so subtilly, that they cannot be defeated without more than ordinary Care. The Tenderneſs of Man's Frame, and the Temptations he is under of making too free with it, require the frequent Aid of a ſkilful Hand to keep the Bodily Machine in Order: And this Skill cannot be attain'd without a general Inſight into the Works of Nature: Not only the Qualities of the Simples in the *inanimate* Part of the Creation, and the Virtues of their ſeveral Compoſitions muſt be known, but alſo the whole *Animal* System; and the  
various

various Accidents it is subject to, in order to make judicious Applications.

By this time we may be inform'd how far the Security of our Lives and Fortunes in this World, and the Happiness of our Souls in another, are affected by Education. Therefore the Learned Professions of *Divinity*, *Law*, and *Physick*, have a just Title to the Honours and Privileges allow'd them, as they are the chief Supports of our depraved Nature, and keep it up to the original Dignity of the Creation. They that duly discharge so good Offices, ought to be esteem'd the greatest Benefactors to Mankind; and, as such, were revered as Deities, before the World knew its true Creator.

The other *Liberal Sciences* have their Share in improving and adorning Human Life. The wonderful Discoveries and various Uses of the  
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*Mathematicks* are a convincing Proof of the Extent of Human Understanding; which, however narrow in its Native Faculties, yet can gradually be enlarged, till it encompass the Globe, and comprehend the Universe.

*Natural Philosophy*, by the Help of This, leads us from the Powers of Mechanism to resolve all our farther Doubts in the Omnipotence of a *First Mover*, and conducts us by the Chain of Second Causes, to the Great Cause of all Things: Of whose Infinite Wisdom we are, by the way, convinced, in the amazing Contrivance of the *Works of the Creation*; and of whose more Intimate Nature, as well as our Own, *Metaphysical Speculations* give us a clearer View.

And no less instrumental are the *Liberal Arts* in furnishing us with the Means, than the Sciences with the Ends of Knowledge. *Grammar* teaches

us to speak ; *Logick*, to think properly ; and *Rhetorick*, to do both agreeably : And by their united Powers, they have convey'd down to us such lively Images of the Genius and Wisdom of the *Ancients*, as have been Patterns for refining the *Modern* Taste. For to them is owing the present Politeness and Civility of *Europe*.

Since therefore the Benefits of Learning extend not only to its own, but succeeding Ages ; a Survey of the State of it in the *Past*, may be of Use towards fixing a due Notion of its Value in the *Present* Times.

### III.

As the whole Creation is a stupendous Instance of the Wisdom of the Almighty Creator ; so we find Man, made after God's Image and Likeness, was early qualify'd to cultivate the Vegetable, and have Dominion over the Animal World. And his earnest

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Desire of enlarging his Knowledge, which he had exercised on all the Works of Nature, led him out of his Bounds, and prompted him to soar into the forbidden Mysteries of the Deity. But his too impatient Appetite for the unseasonable Fruit, prevented his Enjoyment of it in its full Maturity; and he was left to repair his depraved Nature by Labour and Sorrow. The World about him was less productive of the Necessaries and Conveniencies of Life; and He himself, thro' the Impotence and Ignorance of his State, less able to procure them.

Man being thus obliged to live by the *Sweat of his Brow*, it put him upon projecting whatever might contribute to the easier Support or Pleasure of his State; which gave Occasion for the early Invention of *Metals* to assist, and *Musick* to assuage his Labours.

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The first Advances made in other Arts and Sciences, are said to be transmitted to Posterity on *Seth's Pillars*. But we do not hear of any suitable Improvement in the succeeding Generations; which was the most probable Occasion of that general Corruption of Manners, which at length drew Vengeance from an Angry Deity.

After the *Flood*, Arts increased with Mankind, till they misapply'd them in aspiring to rival the Almighty. But the *Confusion of Tongues* put a Stop to their Vanity, and obliged them to disperse, according to their respective Languages, over the Face of the Earth.

The first considerable Settlements we have any Accounts of, were in *Chaldea* and *Egypt*. *Belus* and *Osiris*, King's in each Country, had Divine Honours paid them for their Wisdom, which others did not arrive at by greater Power: Their useful Inventions brought more under their Discipline,

cipline, than their Armies: And the Discoveries they made in the Government of the Heavens, gain'd Respect and Obedience to their Government on Earth.

The *Tower, Palace, and Walls of Babylon*, required great Abilities to contrive, as well as immense Labour to perform. The *Pyramids of Egypt* are lasting Proofs of their Mathematical, and their *Arts of Embalming*, of their Physical Knowledge; and are greater Monuments of the Ingenuity of the Living, than the Memory of the Dead.

But while we are left to wonder at the Effects, we have lost the Arts of these Ancient Nations. The deplorable Accident which happen'd to the Famous *Library at Alexandria*, was an irretrievable Injury both to the foregoing and succeeding Ages. The first were deprived of their just Admiration, and the latter of the Benefit

fit of their Improvements. Here, a new World of Learning would have been open'd to our View, in clearing up the Antiquities not only of *Chaldea*, *Egypt*, and the *neighbouring Nations*, but also of the very Sources from whence they are supposed to derive their Learning, *India* and *Ethiopia*; little more of which is extant, than an empty Name.

What remains of any of these Ancient Stores of *Eastern Learning*, (except what Divine Providence has preserved in *Holy Writ*) is convey'd to us by the *Greeks*. The Fame of those Learned Nations, drew that inquisitive People, as the Wisdom of *Solomon* did the Queen of *Sheba*, in quest of Knowledge. And they return'd Home fraught with such Materials, as laid the Foundation of that flourishing State which they so long enjoy'd, and made them Originals to all succeeding Ages.

*Cadmus*



*Cadmus* brought Letters; *Orpheus* Religion; *Lycurgus* Laws; *Pythagoras*, and the *seven Sages*, Philosophy: And every other curious Traveller apply'd their several Observations to the Improvement of their own Country; which the succeeding Wits refined upon, and recommended with such engaging Address of *Poetry* and *Oratory*, as have been the Standards of Politeness ever since.

The Value of these Immortal Authors is too well known, to receive any Addition from so cursory a Review; and it would be unjust to mention them without a grateful Admiration. All that I can add here, therefore, must be only in general: The *Grecians* so far exceeded other Nations in Politeness, that they called them *Barbarous*: Their great Masters were resorted to from all Parts; and *Athens* became the University of the World.

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The *Romans* being then a rising and generous People, were disposed to embrace whatever might be of Use or Ornament to their State. They form'd their Taste by the *Greek* Exemplars, and enrich'd themselves upon the Spoils of their Learning, as well as their Treasures. *Poetry*, as it usually does, found first Access, and was introduced with Applause upon the Stage. But the Noise of open Wars, and Civil Commotions, soon frightened away the peaceful Muses. And the frequent Occasions of applying to the People, in a Commonwealth, brought the *Art of Speaking* into greatest Esteem; and their Attainments in all other Parts of Knowledge were made subservient to That, which every Age improved till the Time of *Julius Cæsar*, when a Sett of the most accomplish'd *Orators* adorn'd the *Roman Forum* the World ever produced: And if to These we add the correct *Poets* that succeeded in the peaceable

peaceable Reign of *Augustus*, we perhaps may justly conclude with this Character of them; That it is impossible for human Conceptions to be cloath'd in a more engaging Dress, than we find in the Immortal Performances of those Times.

## IV.

Learning, thus following the Course of *Phœbus*, its Patron, being arrived at its Meridian Glory, began visibly to decline. The Genius of *Rome*, as well as *Greece*, having lost its Native Freedom, was no longer capable of these sublime Flights. And the succeeding *Emperors* withdrawing their Encouragements, these flourishing Arts began to droop and wither. A Servile Dependence on luxurious Tyrants, brought more cheap and easy Accomplishments into Esteem; and what Ingenuity remain'd, found its best Account in refining the Luxury, or flattering the Ambition of its Prin-

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ces. And the Decay of the same free Spirit proved fatal to Empire, as well as Learning, which have a mutual Dependence ; and gave Opportunity to their *Barbarous Invaders*, of overwhelming Both, in one common Ruin.

What poor Remains of Literature escaped their Brutish Rage, were confined to the Cells of the *Religious* ; who were suffer'd to enjoy their Devotions in peaceful Retirements. But being there unacquainted with what pass'd in the World, they exercised their Thoughts upon empty *Chimæras*, that had no other Existence than in their own Visionary Fancies ; which were fruitful in nothing but idle Tales, or useless Speculations. However, these false Lights served to lead their Ignorant Masters into the Mazes of Error and Idolatry ; into which they were ready to gain Admittance, at the Expence of their Real Possessions. And thro' a Night of many Centuries, Superstition maintain'd an Universal Empire ; to the Overthrow

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not only of true Religion and Learning but also the very Languages that contained them.

This made a Reformation of Both to be incumber'd with greater Difficulties But the free Disputes of Religion rouz'd them from their lazy Repose, and put them upon searching into Antiquity for the better Defence of their Parties. Hence the Study of the Original Languages was undertaken with great Vigour on both Sides: But the *Reformers*, finding Reason and Antiquity favour'd their Cause, endeavour'd to open the Eyes of the People, by propagating that sort of Knowledge: And to these generous Considerations, were chiefly owing the Provisions made for its Continuance amongst us, in founding *Lectures* in the Universities, and *Schools* of ancient Literature throughout our Nation. And for some Time they had their intended Effects in the Reformation of Religion and Manners: The first was restored to its genuine Beauty

Beauty, by being model'd according to the Plan of the *Scripture* and the *Primitive Church* ; and the other, propagated thro' the Land, by a Familiarity with the Polite Authors of *Greece* and *Rome*.

But Scholars, by this means, increasing, and their Encouragements decreasing, with the Occasion for them ; the general Views of the Present Age seem to be turn'd from the unrewarded Pursuits of Learning, into the more Bountiful Channel of *Trade* and *Business* ; therefore the Methods of Education most in Vogue, are such , as most directly qualify Youth for these Occupations.

And so far they are certainly very commendable. But if those *Higher Accomplishments* be of such universal Use and Ornament to Mankind, as is evident both by the Testimony of Reason, and the Experience of all Civilized Nations, to little Purpose are we endow'd with Reasonable Souls, capable of attaining them, if



if this Divine Part of us be employ'd only in procuring Common Necessaries or such Pleasures as are enjoy'd, perhaps in greater Perfection, by Brutes. Our Time here is short; therefore it behoves us to make the Best of Life in providing for the full Enjoyment of our *Rational*, as well as our *Animal* Nature; which not only affords us the most satisfying Entertainment in our *Present*, but also can be the only Instrument of our Happiness in a *Future* State.



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